



The Coastwatchers Association Inc.

CHARCOALITION

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COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES FOR A CHARCOAL-FREE SOUTH COAST

MEDIA RELEASE

TIMBER

(Updated 6 June 2002)

For 20 years, 200,000 tonnes of trees per annum will be taken from NSW's south coast and southern tableland public forests to supply the proposed charcoal factory. The timber supply area extends from Nowra to Cobargo along the south coast and inland to Braidwood, Captains Flat and points south on Canberra's doorstep. Australian Silicon Ltd plans to establish 8,000 hectares of plantations in the Murray-Darling Basin which will supply the trees for the second 20 year period in the life of the factory.

Although State Forests say that only forest waste will be used in the charcoal plant, this includes trees classified as "standing waste" which, to the casual observer, may look like normal trees. Forest waste is important habitat for many species.

Logs will be debarked in the forests and carted to the charcoal factory. Most will be cut into rounds about 100mm thick by a sawmill on site and stockpiled to air dry for 12 months until the moisture content is reduced to 20-25%. Wood with a higher moisture content requires extra fuel to carbonize the charcoal. About 30,000 tonnes of this wood will be used as fluxwood for the silicon smelter.

State Forests Regional Manager said logging operations will probably use mechanical harvesting and grapple snigging (i.e. high impact low employment operations).

While an Environmental Impact Statement was required for the factory, transport and other important issues, no assessment was required of the additional intensive harvesting activity in our forests.

The government says no EIS is required because the area is covered by the Southern Regional Forest Agreement.